



GCSU President Cathy Cox one of Georgia's 500 Most Influential

Georgia College & State University President Cathy Cox is one of the state's "500 Most Influential Leaders" chosen by Georgia Trend in its second edition of "Georgia 500."

"It's a humbling experience to be included in a group of people who make a difference across Georgia," Cox said. "That's certainly what I hope to accomplish here at a university that is already known for educating students in a different way and preparing them as leaders for a different future."

"The new strategic plan we have just launched, "Imagine 2030," Cox said, "requires that innovation and experiential learning permeate all parts of our curriculum, so that our students are ready for a globally complex world. I'm proud to work with a campus that is committed to making a difference for our students."

This is the second time Cox has been selected for this distinction. She was also named a "500 Most Influential Leader" in the education section of last year's inaugural issue.

"Georgia 500: Georgia's Most Influential Leaders" identifies prominent economic developers, managers and trailblazers in Georgia who have accomplished great strides that positively impact the state and their communities, according to the Georgia Trend website.

The 2023 edition highlights more than 20 industry sectors in the state like education, government, tourism, retail, automotive, banking, agriculture and healthcare.

"This recognition isn't just for me but everyone who teaches, works and studies at Georgia College & State University," Cox said. "It's a testament to our unwavering commitment to students as the state's designated public liberal arts university. We are preparing students for the careers and challenges of tomorrow and cultivating them to be next-generation leaders."

Prior to leading Georgia College & State University, Cox was dean of Mercer University's School of Law and served 10 years as president of Young Harris College in North Georgia. She

served two terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and two terms as Georgia's Secretary of State.

Under Cox's leadership the past two years, Georgia College has seen record-high increases in applications and enrollment; contributed a \$303 million impact to the local economy; and earned top-10 ratings among public universities in Georgia and the Southeast. These include Georgia College as the number-six top public school in U.S. News & World Report's Regional Universities South category for 2023.

The university was recently recognized with an A+ grade by the National Council on Teacher Quality for teaching the science of reading.

Georgia College also received American Association of State Colleges and Universities' prestigious 2023 Excellence & Innovation Award for Student Success and College Completion. This was given for the university's GC Journeys—a program that ensures all students participate in

numerous high-impact practices like undergraduate research, internships, career readiness, engaged community learning, study abroad and leadership.



GCSU President Cathy Cox.



Army veteran shifts his tune toward education



A few years ago, if you'd told Army veteran and former microbiologist Arron Holland that he would be studying music education at Georgia College & State University, he probably would have laughed.

After 14 years in the military and an injury in Iraq—coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic—Arron was pushed out of the only field he'd known.

And changed the trajectory of his life. "Coming to campus was like I was colorblind and seeing through corrective lenses for the first time," Arron said. "I had been wanting to do it and had never quite gotten there."

"It was happiness, it was jubilee," he said. "I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but it lit a fire under my behind. It's been a roller-coaster since day one, and I'm loving it."

His life has always thrummed to the rhythm of jazz. Arron started playing trombone in third grade and was raised in a family that cherished music.

His father and grandfather were trumpet players, and they put jazz in his blood. Alongside his three siblings, also musicians, Arron would play in church and at family reunions.

At some point, life made an about-face and Arron landed in the military. His original idea of making his passion for music into a career drifted, but the music never stopped. Through the ups and downs, the trombone kept him grounded.

"When I needed to clear my head, whatever it was, I would pick up the trombone and play," Arron said. "It had always been my go-to, my release."

Searching for his purpose led him to Georgia College, and to music education.

He's been introduced to Romantic and Baroque music he's never heard—but no one made him feel like jazz wasn't valuable. Any instrument he wants to try is available, doctorate-level faculty are approachable and kind, and he's meeting a diverse array of his peers.

After he graduates, Arron hopes to be a band director in Washington County.

"Grassroots" concert Thursday

On Thursday, Nov. 16, GCSU's Music Therapy Program and the Life Enrichment Center present "Grassroots," a production featuring musicians with "disAbilities" and music therapy students in the Creative Expressions Performance Groups.

The concert will be at 6 p.m. in New City Church at the Mill, 224 E. Walton Street, Milledgeville.

This year's theme, "Back Porch Celebration," will take you home with great songs like Dolly Parton's "Jolene," Chris Stapleton's "Tennessee Whiskey," Lyn's "Sweet Home Alabama," the Charlie Daniels Band's "Devil Went Down to Georgia" and a melody of the late Jimmy Buffett's music.

A \$5 donation is encouraged. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GCSU Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc. For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu.



High achievers shine with Academic Outreach

A collaboration between Academic Outreach and the High Achievers Program resulted in a field trip to Lake Laurel to learn about water ecology and drew the attention of local media.

The High Achievers Program is an afterschool program for high school students that focuses on leadership and personal development through science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM), mental health and physical activities. Each year they celebrate "Lights On After School," which is the only nationwide event that celebrates after school programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities.

Kenneth Daniels, High Achievers program coordinator, reached out to Ruth Eilers, director of Academic Outreach, to discuss an opportunity to collaborate that would be unique for the participants of the High Achievers Program. Eilers, a recent recipient of the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Trainer of the Year Award, developed a special program that included exploring the foliage on the trails at Lake Laurel and learning about the macros in the lake water.

Both the High Achievers Program and Academic Outreach strive to provide quality educational programs.



Did you know?

Georgia College & State University students, faculty and staff celebrated El día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) in several campus locations recently.

Working with faculty in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, students in SPAN 1002 built an altar—called an ofrenda—in the front atrium of Arts & Sciences. Members of the GCSU Latino Student Association (LSA) built their ofrenda in The Hub last week, where it has since been on display.

Students remembered their loved ones by including pictures of relatives and friends, candles and images of ornate decorated skulls—called calaveras.

Traditional ofrendas are built in honor of deceased love ones to welcome them home from Nov. 1-2, when Día de Los Muertos is celebrated. Altars may vary from one culture to another, but most include marigolds, candles, photos of the deceased and cut tissue-paper.

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/events

Table with 5 columns: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Each column contains event details for a specific date (14-18).